HOW TO BEGIN

The first step in beginning German research is to identify the immigrant ancestor as fully as possible from U.S. sources, including a birth date, date of immigration, province of origin, and, if possible, a precise town of birth. Church records, obituaries, naturalizations, census records, and passenger lists all can provide important clues. Additional material not listed in this pathfinder may be found by consulting the library’s online catalog under the subjects: Germans in ...; Germany, etc.; under a specific province, such as “Palatinate” or “Hesse,” or under a specific record type.

RESEARCH GUIDES

The Genealogy Department maintains a strong collection of guidebooks for beginning German research. Some of the works listed below contain important bibliographies that lead to other sources.


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Schweitzer, George R. German Genealogical Research. Knoxville, Tennessee?: The Author. 1992. /GC 929 Sch93g/ A basic guide that provides addresses and sample letters for requesting information from Germany.


PASSENGER, EMIGRATION & IMMIGRATION LISTS

Passenger lists, available on microfilm, occasionally offer clues about an immigrant's origin in Germany. In addition, many of the emigration lists below will record a person’s departure from a specific village in Germany.

Burgert, Annette K. Check this author’s name in the online catalog for references to dozens of volumes listing German emigrants and their place of origin.


*German Emigrants Register*. Diepholz, Germany: s.n., 1992. /microfiche/ Contains 12,000 names of emigrants, army deserters, and missing heirs from across the former German Empire.


________. *Auswanderungen aus demfrüheren Hochstift Speyer nach Sudosteuropa und Ubersee im XVIII Jahrhundert*. Kaiserslautern: Heimatstelle Pfalz, 1969. /Gc 943.46 H11a/ Lists about 2400 18th-century emigrations from the Bishopric of Speyer.


*Hamburg Passenger Lists: Direct Lists March 2, 1850 -Dec. 31, 1900 and Direct Index April 1, 1855 - April 5, 1901*. /microtext/ A record of departures from Hamburg, one of the principal ports of embarkation.


Smith, Clifford Neal. More than twenty-five individual texts containing German passenger lists, some of which have not been indexed in Filby's *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index*. For a complete listing, check under the author’s name in the online catalog.

Stumpp, Karl. *Emigrants from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763 to 1862*. Lincoln, Nebraska: American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1973. /GC 929.13 St95e/ Lists 20,000 emigrant families with origins.


**MILITARY RECORDS**

Auerbach, Inge and Otto Frohlich, eds. *Hessische Truppen im Amerikanischen Unabhangigkeitskrieg* (HETRINA) Marburg/Lahn: Der Archivschule Marburg, 1972-1987. 6 vols. /Gc 973.34 Aalmar Bd. 1-6/ Computer printouts of German mercenary troops from Hessen-Kassel (v. 1-4), Waldeck (v. 5), and Hessen Hauau (v. 6), 1776-1784. Includes soldier's town of origin.


**GAZETTEERS AND MAPS**

*Autoatlas, Deutschland : 1:200,000*. Berlin: R.V. Verlag, 1996. /Gc 943 Au82/ German atlas for a reunified Germany.


*Maps of the German Empire, 1845-1916 (Karte des Deutschen Reiches)*. /microtext/ Detailed maps of the German Empire. Scale 1:100,000. Published in the 19th and early 20th centuries, this is the most detailed German map series available in the Genealogy Department. Use the map numbers from the grid at the beginning of the roll to find the more detailed maps that follow.

Minert, Roger P. Check this author’s name in the online catalog for references to place name indices available for Schleswig-Holstein (with Bremen, Hamburg, and Lubeck), Braunschweig, Oldenburg, Thuringia, Hanover, Baden, Hesse, Hesse-Nassau, Mecklenburg, Palatinate, and Wurttemberg.

Mueller, Joachim. *Muellers Grosses Deutsches Ortsbuch*. 18th ed. Stuttgart: Mair, 1974. /Gc 943.003 M91m/ Lists more than 107,000 places with those in western Germany referenced to the *Deutsche Generalkarte*, described above. Instructions inside the cover.


**SURNAME DICTIONARIES**

Surname dictionaries may offer clues about an ancestor's place of origin. Although some, such as occupational names, are found throughout the former German Empire, others are more rare and can be traced to a particular region. The following dictionaries provide information about the origin and meaning of German surnames.


**GENEALOGIES AND NOBILITY**

The Genealogy Department's holdings of German vital records is limited to what is available on the *International Genealogical Index* component of FamilySearch available at www.FamilySearch.org, which includes millions of birth and marriage records. In addition, the collection also houses many published genealogies of German nobility and burghers, including coats of arms for some families. Several other sources listed below trace the German origins of 18th century immigrants from the Palatinate.

*Almanach de Gotha: annuaire genealogique, diplomatique et statistique*. 111 vols. Gotha: Justus Perthes, 1819-1934. /Gc 929.7 A16/ Covers all grades of German nobility, including commoners who were granted coats of arms and/or raised to minor nobility status.


PERIODICALS

Some German-interest periodicals include: German Genealogical Digest, German Genealogical Society of America Bulletin, German Connection, Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage, and Palatine Immigrant. For a subject index to articles in these and other periodical titles, check the PERiodical Source Index (PERSI) or the following index:


BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Genealogy Department owns a number of important bibliographical works that lead to collections of German sources outside this library. The researcher is encouraged to explore them for further references.


Pochmann, Henry A. *Bibliography of German Culture in America to 1940*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1953. /Gc 016.325243 P75b/


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